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SUBJECT: NINEWA: IRAQI GOVERNMENT SAYING THE RIGHT THINGS
ON MOSUL RECONSTRUCTION; FOLLOW-THROUGH IS KEY

Classified By: NINEWA PRT LEADER JASON HYLAND: 1.4 (B) AND (D)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

Summary

¶1. (C/REL ACGU) Summary and Comment: The Iraqi Government is focused on Mosul security and reconstruction. The massive explosion in January in West Mosul's Zanjali market and ongoing military operations served as catalysts to focus the Iraqi Government at the highest level on the critical importance of Mosul in winning the national fight to contain the insurgency and move on to reconstruction and economic development. If the Iraqi government can provide substantial emergency funding for Mosul reconstruction and make some improvements in the Public Distribution System and other hot-button basic services, the overall USG counter-insurgency efforts in the province will be more effective. Intensive high-level GOI engagement is critical to success, given the limitations of local players, particularly the Kurdish-back Sunni Provincial Governor, whose erratic judgment counterbalances his genuine bravery in the face of assassination threats.

¶2. (C/REL ACGU) Summary and Comment C,td: PRT Ninewa, in close coordination with the Regiment and Division, is identifying critical reconstruction priorities, and providing expert advice to provincial Directors General and other stakeholders so that the province can develop and then implement the most coherent and effective plan possible. COMMENT: Mosul has many unmet needs, and how quickly and effectively the Iraqi government steps in to redevelop this hard-hit city will have a major impact on the long-term prospects for success here. Because of the unusually high focus on Mosul right now, we see a good opportunity to get the Iraqi government to direct needed resources, including a substantial supplementary budget allocation immediately after the major phase of kinetic operations ends, to respond to a long list of provincial and city requests. End Summary and Comment.

Prime Minister Reaches out to Ninewa

¶2. (C/REL ACGU) Following the January Zanjali explosion in Mosul, Prime Minister Maliki, accompanied by the National Security Advisor, Minister of Defense, Iraqi Army Chief of Staff, Deputy Minister of Interior and other senior officials, flew to Mosul in early February to give his full support to the military fight in Mosul, and equally important, to the reconstruction and redevelopment of Iraqi's second-largest city. He then chaired in Baghdad the following week a review of Mosul security operations, a meeting that

included Ninewa Operations Center (NOC) Commander LTG Riyadh, the Provincial leadership, MND-N Commanding General MG Hertling, and significantly, Iraqi Vice President Hashimi.

¶3. (C/REL ACGU) Prime Minister Maliki met February 14 in Baghdad in a small group with the Ninewa Governor and Vice Governor. The Governor and Vice Governor told PRT Leader that Maliki asked them to use the 2008 provincial budget allocation to the maximum, adding that a supplemental emergency budget allocation for Mosul could only be considered in the summer. Governor Kashmoula told us that the meeting was "very good," saying that the Prime Minister told him he would give him "anything he needs."

¶4. (C/REL ACGU) The Vice Governor said that, at their request, the Prime Minister will dispatch to Mosul very soon (date uncertain) several deputy ministers from service ministries to discuss Mosul reconstruction. At the same time, the Prime Minister asked the Governor to get a prioritized list of Mosul's needs ready in a comprehensive report; the Governor told us he is preparing it. The Vice Governor said that when the deputy ministers arrive they will convene a meeting with the provincial Directors General and other provincial officials. (NOTE: The Governor defended to us the 2008 budget as a solid, well-planned document that includes input from all local councils, including in Mosul. However, it was prepared before the latest military operations in the city began.)

Political Pot is Stirring

¶5. (C/REL ACGU) The political pot appears to be stirring, now that the passage in parliament (not yet approved by the

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Presidency Council) of the Provincial Powers Law makes the prospect very real of parliamentary elections in Ninewa and throughout Iraq this year. Kurds run the provincial government largely because of the Sunni Arab boycott, but as a Sunni Arab-majority province, the pickings are ripe for Sunni Arab politicians. The Vice Governor said that the repeated visits to Mosul by Prime Minister's Advisor Zuhair Al-Chalabi are helpful, but also reflect a clear political agenda. Similarly, the unusual engagement by Vice President Hashimi - including a high-profile visit to Mosul February 23-24 (septel) - likely reflects an interest in Mosul beyond the current security operations. We believe that all this political interest is useful, provided it channels into more support for a city desperately in need of help.

Ninewa's "Governor Problem"

¶6. (C/ACGU) Governor Kashmoula is the Sunni Arab "face" to Kurdish provincial rule in Ninewa, Iraq's most ethnically and religiously mixed province, with substantial communities of Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Christians, Shebak, Yezidi, and both Shi'a and Sunni Turkoman. Kashmoula is from one of the distinguished old families of Mosul, and the Kurds are likely very aware of his impeccable pedigree. However, Kashmoula is erratic, capricious, and disliked far and wide in the province, even as he has again and again demonstrated courage to remain committed to his work, despite the killing of a dozen family members and numerous assassination attempts on his own life. For most Sunni Arabs he is simply a Kurdish puppet.

¶7. (C/REL ACGU) Kashmoula is not the person one would choose to unify a city and a province on a reconstruction plan. However, we see no sign that he will leave office before provincial elections, if only because the Kurds show no sign of dropping their support for him, and a Sunni Arab politician with the right connections would probably avoid the Kurdish embrace at all costs. With these limited options, we work with the Governor and his staff - especially

his very capable Kurdish Vice Governor - and the Directors General, as well as with the Mosul Mayor and other key officials, to prepare the ground for developing and implementing a coherent and effective reconstruction plan for the city.

Political Space for Mosul's Activist Mayor

¶8. (C/REL ACGU) Mosul Mayor Zuhair, who is appointed by the Governor, appears to have no independent political base of his own and, as a Shi'a, comes from a distinct minority in this largely Sunni Arab and Kurdish city. However, he is activist and appears to be popular among local citizens. He frequently seems to be testing his political limits with the Governor. The Mayor told PRT Leader and staff February 19 that in the coming year he would like to focus on projects that impact the average citizen. The Mayor said that average citizens would tell you that nothing has changed in the past three years. The Mayor would like to see reconstruction money focus on the basic needs of Mosul citizens, including electricity, hospitals, higher education infrastructure construction projects, sewage treatment, road construction and, solid waste management, on which the PRT is already working closely with provincial officials and others. The Mayor also suggested the Public Distribution System deliveries would be improved if the province could source items from Syria or Turkey. Mayor Zuhair is emphatic that the reconstruction plan for the city needs to have substantial input from him and other local officials, not just the Governor and the Provincial Council. (COMMENT: We agree.)

DG Angle

¶9. (C/REL ACGU) The Director General of Electricity is aware of the needs of Mosul residents and actively working with the PRT and provincial government to identify and prioritize the city's needs. He has a list of 10 short-term and 10 long-term electricity projects that would help relieve the city's electricity shortage. The PRT is working with him to develop a strategic plan that covers an electricity plan for the province that integrates his approach with the rest of the provincial government. While the PRT is already working closely with the Directors General on an individual level, over the next month, the PRT will be expanding this level of interaction and planning with all infrastructure-related Directors General as a group. Multi-National Division-North's

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"United and Strong" and "United and Prosperous" conferences, which bring together all the governors from northern Iraq and other top Iraqi officials, are also an extremely useful means to accelerate planning on Mosul reconstruction and other crucial provincial issues.

NOC Angle - LTG Riyadh

¶10. (C/REL ACGU) LTG Riyadh, the commander of the Ninewa Operations Center, is a player in the political spectrum in his own right. While Governor Kashmoula sees the Mosul native as a possible threat to his power, Sunni Arabs in the province appear to be happy to see a strong Sunni Arab in charge of security forces. The Governor and LTG Riyadh must work together to coordinate successful post-kinetic reconstruction in Mosul. The Governor cannot ignore LTG Riyadh, nor can Riyadh expect to see reconstruction and political reconciliation without the Governor. Recognizing this dynamic, the PRT is working closely with the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment and the First Armored Division to forge a common USG strategy for bringing Governor Kashmoula and LTG Riyadh together to pursue a single Ninewa strategy for reconstruction.

COMMENT

¶11. (C/REL ACGU) The Iraqi government is paying attention to Mosul right now. We believe it is important to encourage the Iraqis to take advantage of the resulting political leverage to get financial support for Mosul's reconstruction, and ongoing strong political support for other pressing needs. While we recognize the realities of the Iraqi parliamentary process, the sooner parliament can consider substantial emergency funding for Mosul reconstruction, the better. Similarly, the Iraqi central government can take other steps to direct resources to Mosul - whether through supporting the popular PDS food-ration program, which would be a very visible sign to the average citizen that conditions were improving - or other means. PRT Ninewa, in close coordination with the Regiment and Division, is identifying critical reconstruction priorities, and providing expert advice to provincial Directors General and other stakeholders so that the province can develop and then implement the most coherent and effective plan possible.
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